

Financial Services – Investment Operations Standard

Role / Occupation: Investment Operations Specialist

Overview:

Investment Operations Specialists work within the operational and administrative areas of businesses in the Financial Services sector that engage in investment management, investment consulting, trading and reporting activities. Millions of investment transactions are conducted within the UK Financial Services sector every day on behalf of institutional and retail clients, ranging from private individuals and small businesses to unit trusts, pension funds, charities, corporations and governments within the UK and overseas. The financial instruments and products are varied and increasingly complex, requiring specialist skill to ensure that they are efficiently processed, registered, reported and valued within the employing organisation, between counterparties and to end clients.

The Role:

This role typically sits within the Operations areas of stock exchanges, stockbrokers, investment managers, banks, financial advice and wealth management firms, and investment consulting and investment administration businesses. A fully competent employee will be capable of performing complex and specialised activities, be fluent in the systems and processes of the organisation, will be aware of the wider risk implications of their role and the business, and they may have training or supervisory responsibilities within their area of expertise. Typical activities that may be carried out by a fully competent employee include, but are not limited to:

- Processing and settlement of derivatives or complex investments
- Calculation and management of initial and ongoing margin for derivatives positions
- Valuation of complex investment portfolios
- Preparation of investment performance reports for clients and investment managers
- Preparation of management reports for internal review
- Selection of investment funds for platforms accessed by retail customers, based on pre-defined criteria
- Resolving complex issues within and across departments

Competencies:

Knowledge	What is required
Industry and company understanding	Sound understanding of the structure of the Financial Services industry and in particular the role and purpose of markets and the process of investing; the role of the function in which they work; how this role relates to other functions within their department and to the wider business. Deeper knowledge of specific markets and supporting operational protocols as required by the employing organisation.
Regulatory & compliance	Sound understanding of the Financial Services regulatory framework and ethics, and the ability to apply relevant rules and principles to their own role and within their team. Able to identify and communicate risks to the relevant management or compliance personnel within the organisation.
Products	Sound understanding of the technical, investment and settlement characteristics of the main investment products, instruments, currencies and markets, including derivative instruments and complex products. Understands how an investment instrument or product is typically used within the industry and how it may meet specified client objectives.
Systems & processes	Proficient in the IT skills, systems and processes required to deliver consistent outcomes. Aware of how these support and fit within the wider business and the sector. Understands the types of risks that may arise through operational activities and how these risks can be mitigated. <i>Can utilise complex processes and multiple systems as required.</i>
Client Service and Relationships	Communicates effectively and professionally with clients, external counterparties and internal staff. Adheres to internal standards, market protocol and regulatory rules and principles for reporting purposes. Understands the relationships and service requirements between markets, clients and their intermediaries.
Skills	What is required
Service delivery	Maintains a consistently high standard of service internally, towards clients and with intermediaries. Adheres to well defined timeframes, systems and processes. Consistently attentive to accuracy, detail and timeliness; meets required risk, regulatory and governance requirements. <i>Performs tasks which may be complex, specialised, or non-routine, such as</i>

	<i>bespoke (OTC) derivative settlement and margin calculations, monitoring and processing these complex transactions through to completion; Preparing management, investment performance or review reports for internal and external clients.</i>
Communicating and Influencing	Adopts high quality written and verbal communication skills as appropriate for communicating with internal and external clients. . Builds positive relationships with clients and colleagues using sound interpersonal and influencing skills. Able to coach/train less experienced colleagues. Able to communicate and negotiate complex situations and issues that may arise.
Team working & collaboration	Consistently supports colleagues and the wider business, collaborating to achieve results. Aware of their role within team, how their team fits within the business and how the team's decisions impacts on others. Takes a leadership role in the team when appropriate. Operates well under time pressure.
Ownership & Initiative	Takes ownership for delivery in their area of responsibility, both for the core role and for developing and implementing changes. Able to exercise autonomy and judgement within fairly broad parameters. Finds effective ways to resolve issues. Escalates decisions and issues when necessary. <i>Capable of resolving complex issues that may involve other business areas.</i>
Personal development	Proactively plans and records their own development; seeks constructive feedback and incorporates within development plan; keeps up to date with changes in all areas of the role; shows commitment to the job and the industry.
Behaviours	What is required
Honesty & Integrity	Truthful, sincere in their actions and does the right thing (even when not the easiest). Handles client information confidentially.
Adaptability	Willing to accept changing priorities and work patterns when new jobs need to be done, or when requirements change.
Enthusiasm	Shows drive and energy in their work, when things are going well and when challenges arise

Duration

The duration of the apprenticeship will typically be 18- 24 months

Qualifications

The apprentice will complete an appropriate qualification/examinations (as considered most relevant by the employer) from one of the following Professional Bodies:

- Chartered Institute of Securities and Investment - Investment Operations Certificate; Certificate in Investment Management; Investment Advice Diploma; Managing Operational Risk in Financial Institutions
- CFA Institute / CFA UK - Investment Management Certificate

Link to professional registration and progression

Completion of one of the qualifications listed will enable the apprentice to apply for membership of the relevant Professional Body.

This apprenticeship is most likely to be a progression from a lower level apprenticeship, building on previously acquired knowledge and skills. On completion, the apprentice will be fully competent in the role and this will enable them to decide how they might wish to progress further into organisation- specific career options. The range of available qualifications also provides routes into specific areas of the business. This could include careers in Investment Analysis, Management and Administration roles; Risk Controller, Manager or Modeller; dealing and/or advising in Securities, Derivatives or Packaged Products.

Level

This is a Level 4 apprenticeship

Review date

After 3 years or when significant change is required